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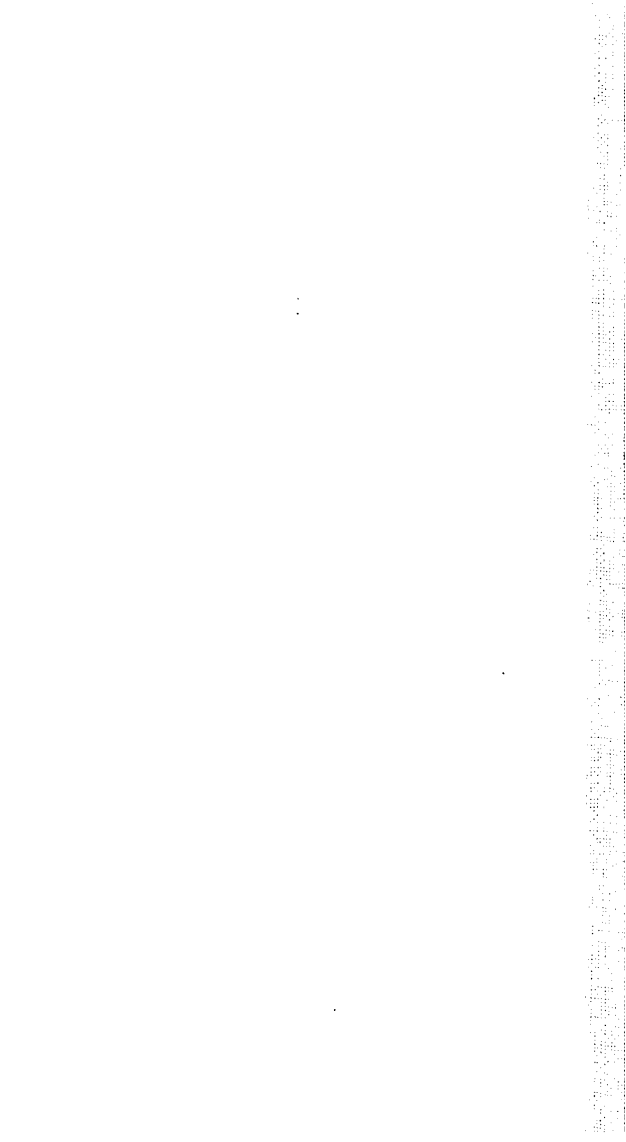


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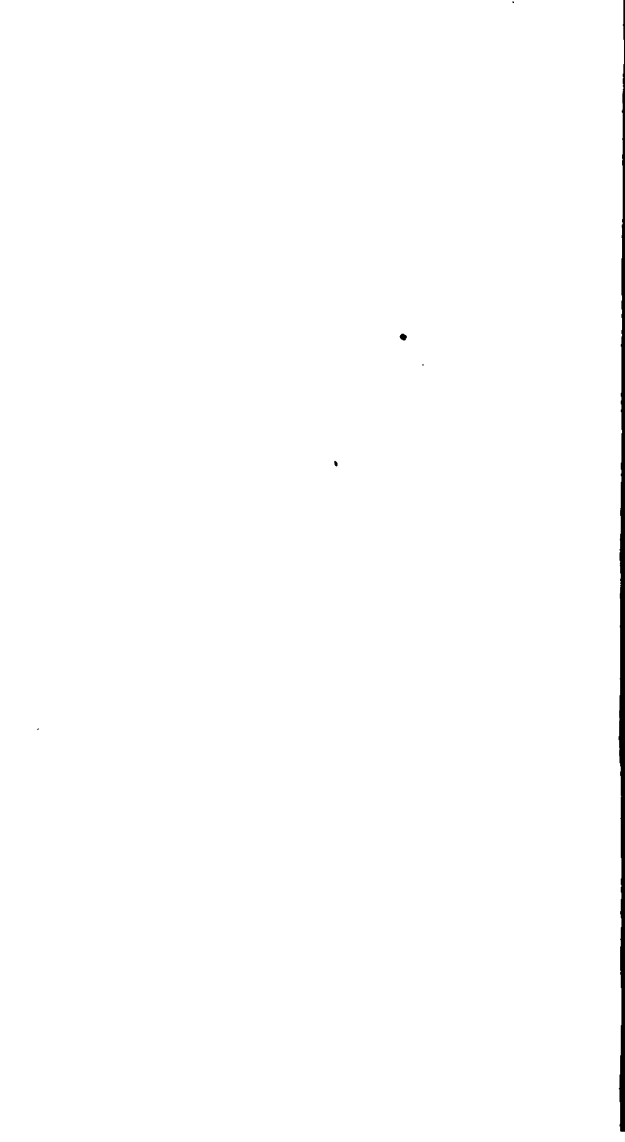


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Davidson







SMITH

A Tragedy

BY

JOHN DAVIDSON

AUTHOR OF 'ERUCHI: A DRAMA'

GLASGOW

FREDERICK W. WILSON AND BROTHER

1888

LETTER

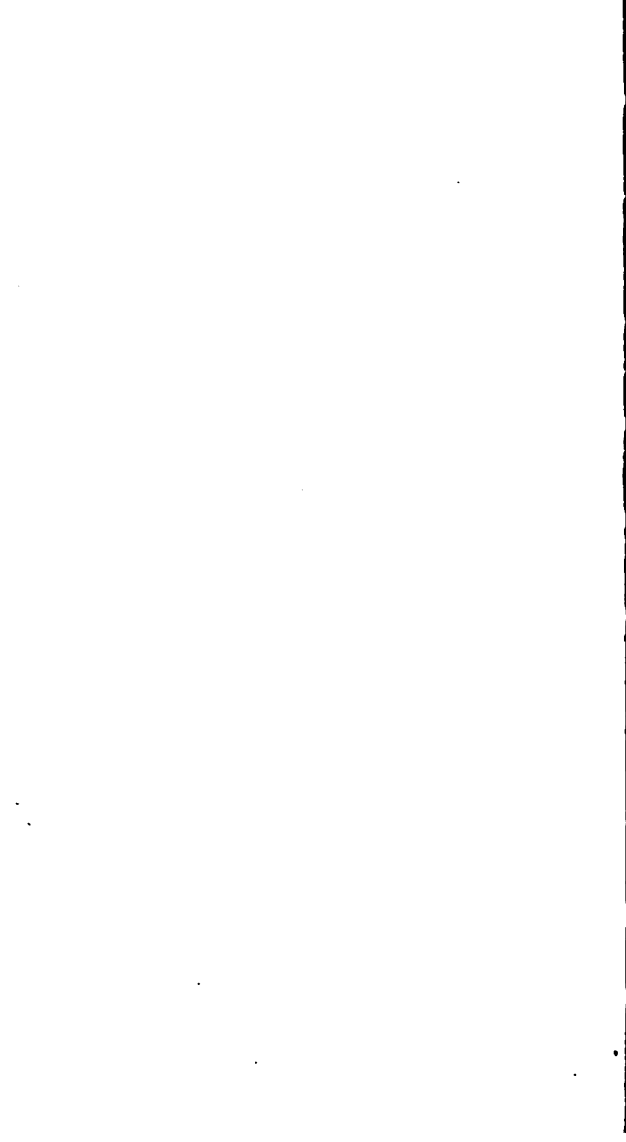
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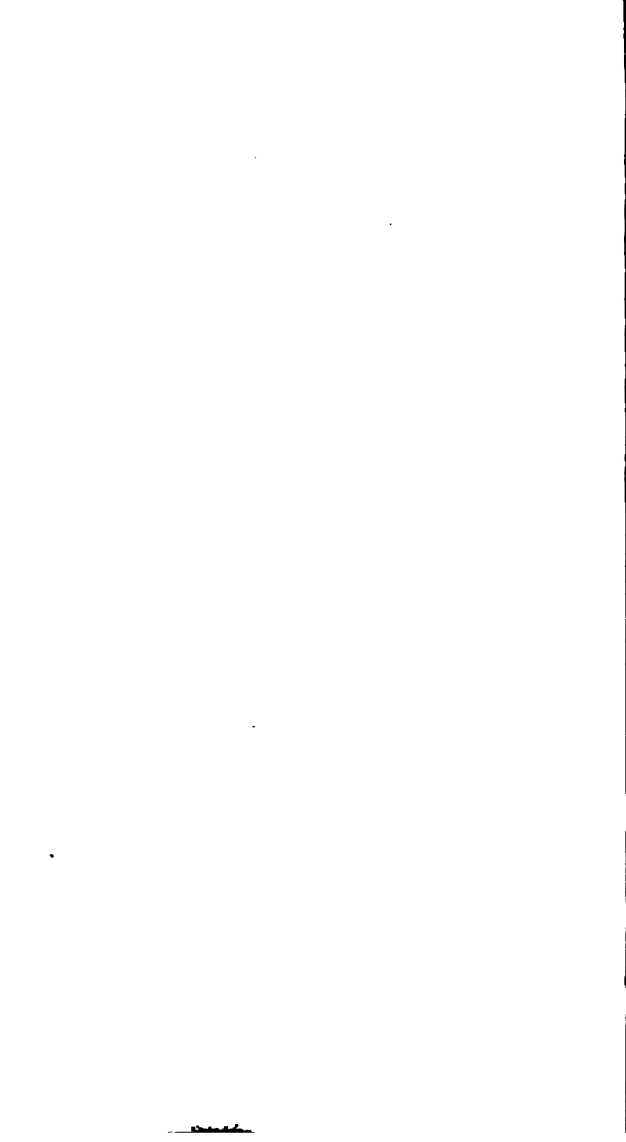
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SMITH : A TRAGEDY



S M I T H

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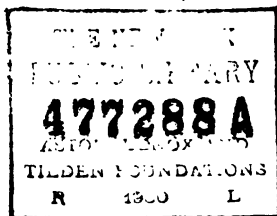
FREDERICK W. WILSON AND BROTHER

1888

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TO
JOHN NICHOL, Esq., M.A. Oxon., LL.D.,
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,
I DEDICATE THIS PLAY
WITH RESPECTFUL ADMIRATION.

Maggs Bros 20 Jan. 1930



SMITH: A TRAGEDY

SMITH:

A Tragedy.

PERSONS.

SMITH.

HALLOWES.

GRAHAM.

BROWN.

JONES.

ROBINSON.

Two Men-servants.

MAGDALEN.

TOPSY.

Scene.—LONDON AND GARTH.

Time.—THE PRESENT.

SMITH.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Room in a LONDON TAVERN.*

Glasses on the table. BROWN is discovered talking excitedly; JONES, attempting to interrupt him; and ROBINSON, in a corner with a newspaper.

Brown. Truth is an airy point between two
cliffs

Of adamant opinion : safest he

Who foots it far from either beetling brink.

Hallowes, now : he goes hanging on the verge

His martyr-face and aspirations strung

With bent keys. If his starting eyes behold

Some tartan star, or other fire-flaught born
Of pallid brains ill-nourished on bleached
blood,

It is the truth—truth absolute ! And down,
Loosing his hold to clasp his fervid hands,
He'll crash, and spill his life on stones untrod.

Robinson. Fair—very fair, indeed !

Jones. So would not you !
The Bastille Column or St. Paul's at noon,
Where crowds may see your glossy frock-coat
fly,
And wax pathetic o'er the exotic spray
That slips the button-hole in middle air,
And twinkling after, lights upon the mess
Of limbs and oozing blood that late was you.

Robinson. Come, let each other be ! no
answer, Brown ;

Because I want to open up a point.
That fellow, Smith—the point is suicide—
He said the other day—why, it was here!—
He would have coffee; we had brandy: well—
You know he speaks to everybody; so,
He cries to Topsy, there, who brought the
drink—
He spoils the barmaids with his high-flown
talk :
I tried it, and they laughed at me ; but he !
He talks philosophy, religion, books ;
And they can talk it too, with him. Well,
then——

Brown. Pure innocence : the man's a baby.

Jones.

Yes.

Uncultured, too ; he lacks the college stamp.

Robinson. Well, then, my point——

Brown. Oh, never mind your point !
You've hit it, Jones ; "uncultured" is the
word.

Give me a man who knows what language
means :

No forging sudden bolts that gild the fact,
A bright enough reality before :

Who never says a thing a thousand ways,
Nibbling with slippery sleight-of-tongue, till
chance

Expose the end to bite. Give me a man
Whose mind is ready as a lawyer's desk,
Each pigeon-hole accountable for this,
Each drawer containing that, and nothing else.

Jones. Whose thinking's done ; whose au-
tomatic mind

Strikes the same absolute response each time.

Brown. A man who knows the best of every-
thing ;

Consummate, bland ; whom novelty annoys,
Guessing what musty masquerade it is
Of some dispute of Lamech and his wives.

Jones. Smith's a mere savage, barbarous as
a Lapp :
A handsome creature, but—elliptical.

Brown. Something awanting to complete
the sense !

Robinson. Fair, very fair ! But here's a
point : you men,
Since you began to go about with Smith,
Have caught a little of his style of talk ;
You can't deny his power.

Brown. Power ?—seething blood.
Give Jones, or such a man, Smith's body—
why,

You'd have the hero of the age ! Power ?—
stuff !

Jones. Admit the power—potential as a ,
troop ;
But where's the captain ?

Brown. Ay ; his brain's a mess
Of sodden sawdust ; it ferments and fumes :
But, let me say, wood-spirit's not champagne,
In spite of fables to the contrary.

Jones. Labels, you mean.

Robinson. Fair—very fair, by Jove !
Do you go north this year ?

Brown. I do, this week.

Robinson. So soon ! Health and a happy
holiday !

Jones. Your good health and a pleasant time
in Garth !

Robinson. Here's a point, Brown. Hallowes
—he talks of Garth :

I thought the place was only known to you.

Brown. Hallowes discovered it a year ago :
And there I met him.

Jones. So : I understand
How such an out-at-elbows man as he
Is known to you : there you had no one else.

Brown. Exactly : with his simple ecstasies
He made good sport when Maudlin took the
dumps.

Jones. When do you wed your cousin ?

Brown. In a month.

Jones. Is the day fixed?

Brown. I go to have it fixed.

Robinson. Your cousin, Magdalen . . .
By Jove, here's Smith!

(*Enter SMITH.*)

Smith. You here! Has Hallowes been?

Brown. No; not to-night.
Are you to meet him?

Smith. Yes.

Brown. He'll not appear :
He acts the people's notion of a poet.
He has a double memorandum-book—
Engagements to be broken—to be kept ;
And most of those he makes are for the first :

“Sorry I failed you,” when he sees you; “but”—
And you are left to gather that the muse
Hugged him so close he couldn’t get away.

Smith. He’ll not fail me.

Jones. Don’t be too sure of that.
I’ve known him break with me a dozen times.

Smith. Perhaps he’s braver than your other
friends.

Jones. The satire’s deep.

Brown. A little underbred—
Hallowes, I mean.

Robinson. Still he’s a graduate.

Jones. Finished apprentice; but he shuns
the stress

Of competition with the journeymen,
Whereby alone dexterity is gained.

Brown. A fledgling knight who flies the
eager fray
Where sword whets sword.

Robinson. He herds with nobody,
I've noticed that. But here's a point: I, you,
Smith—everybody wants to know the man;
He—won't be known: no one can equal him
In turning forth the dark slide when you think
Acquaintance burns to intimacy. Smith,
Only you see his lantern blazing bright;
How's that?

Brown. Speak for yourself, sir. This I know,
He rather courted me. His fitful wisp,
However, I assure you, Robinson,
Leads to a quaking bog of egotism.

Jones. Where I have floundered more than
once. A month—

Three weeks ago, when he gave up his post
In—Holofernes' School—the Cambridge
man's—

That very day I met him here alone.

“I'm done with it,” he cried. “These squalid
years

Of mental boot-blackening are ended now—

My shameful pedagogy. Ah,” he said,

With lips that shook and molten eyes, his
voice

Hushing and sparkling as his passion tore

A ragged way through wordy wildernesses,

Or spread, where image failed, in shallows
vague,

With margin lost in rushy verbiage,

“Shameful! a devil's compact! I, for food

Have made myself a grindstone, edging souls

Meant most for flying: I, in piteous mouths,

That yearned for sweetest manna, crammed
rough stones
And loathsome scorpions : children, youths,
the light
Of God brought newly down by love,
Straining to shine on all the flowers of earth,
Of heaven, of poetry, have I swathed up
In noisome fog of the dead letter—I,
Who dare aspire to be a child for ever.
Intolerance in religion never dreamt
Such fell machinery of Acts and Codes
As now we use for nipping thought in bud,
And turning children out like nine-pins, each
As doleful and as wooden. Never more
Shall I put hand to such inhuman work !”
To come with this to me, who teach, and
mean
To start a boarding-school next year !

Brown.

By Jove !

The net result of solitude. This world,

This oyster, with its valves of toil and play
Would round his corners for its own good
 ease,
And make a pearl of him if he'd plunge in.

Smith. Then you would change the diamonds
 into pearls,
The rubies and the opals ?

Robinson.

Very fair !

Brown. Better a pure pearl than a damaged
 diamond.

Jones. And in this matter we may all be
 pearls.

Smith. Be worldings, truly. I would rather
 be

A shred of glass that sparkles in the sun,
And keeps a lowly rainbow of its own,

Than one of those so trim and patent pearls
With hearts of sand veneered, sowed up and
down
The stiff brocade society affects.

Robinson. Fair, very fair !

Jones. Be quiet, parroquet !
Are we such pearls ?

Smith. Pearls ! This is what you are :
The commonest type of biped crawling here.
Take it thus crudely : you would not believe
A subtle phrase in full, but think I meant
Less than the words might bear, deeming me
dull—
Barbarian you call me . . .

Brown. Who said that ?

Smith. The friends of gossips gossip, little
Brown.

Brown. The great Smith gossips too, then.

Smith. What ! You fool !
You dare to bandy words with me ! Begone !
Get out of here the three of you !

Jones. He's mad.

Smith. You sots, you maggots, shavings,
asteroids !
A million of you wouldn't make a man !
Out, or I'll strike you, monkeys, mannikins !

*(All go out ; then re-enter SMITH, followed
by TOPSY with salver, etc.)*

Smith. You're looking fresh : you've had a
holiday ?

Topsy. I've had my week.

Smith. Where were you?

Topsy. At the coast.

Smith. Now, tell me, what of all you saw,
remains?

Topsy. Oh, well—there's many a thing!
There's—— Ah! there's this!
One morning early that I stood alone,
And saw the green sea from a windy cliff,
With small, white, curling waves, like shavings
pinned
Upon a watered silk.

Smith. Oh! how was that?

Topsy. There was a great Scotch lady long
ago—

I read it in a penny paper there ;
That made me think of it ; and she was poor,
And wore, instead of ribbons, shavings once,
And was the belle and made a match that
night.

Here's Mr. Hallowes, sir.

Smith.

The same for him.

(Enter HALLOWES. TOPSY goes out, and returns as before, and goes out again.)

Hallowes. Smith, I congratulate you. Come,
your hand.

Smith. Thank you ; I'm very pleased indeed. On what ?

Hallowes. On the great gladness you're
about to feel.

I've lost my post—dismissed—incompetence.

Smith. So soon ! I said three months : it's
just three weeks.

Business is worse than teaching, then.

Hallowes.

O, worse !

Give me a week to coin its condemnation !

Business—the world's work—is the sale of
lies :

Not goods, but trade-marks ; and still more
and more

In every branch becomes the sale of money :
Why, goods are now the means of bartering
gold !

Smith. It fits these reeling times of tail-
wagged dogs.

Hallowes. But wish me joy.

Smith. Joy, friend, till pain be ease !

Hallowes. Now will I tell you what I mean
to do.

Garth's in the north, a hamlet like a cave,
Nestling unknown in tawny Merlin's side,
A mount, brindled with scars and waterways.
The windows, Argus-eyed with knotted panes
That under heavy brows of roses blink
Blind guard, have never wept with hail-stones
stung ;

No antique, gnarled, and wrinkled, round-
wood porch,

Whiskered with hollyhocks in this old thorpe
Has ever felt the razor of the East :

No rail, no coach, no tourist passes there :
But in the brooding evening from her seat,
A worn tree-trunk, the toothless beldame leaps
As lithe as superstition, says a saw,
And kills the toad that in the channel hops ;
Far up the mountain children's voices ring ;
The quoiters cry ; and past the ivied inn

A chastened brook tells all its pebbled beads ;
The commonest bird that sings is wonderful,
So empty are the spaces of the air
Between the bourtrie-bushes and the thorns
From any breath of modern weariness.
There will I live and walk the mountain-side,
Looking across the strath upon a stream,
A beakerful of water, spilt along
A winding strip of green and bosky spray,
That showers in silver when light-fingered
winds
Turn up the leaves : a ridge, fire-reared and
low,
Of coppice-covered hills, scalloped against
A loftier mass of purple, nobly borne,
Gives body to the sunset—one might say,
The pilgrim-hat of this sore-travelled earth
That ever dauntlessly plods heavenward.

Smith. And is this to be wholly holiday ?

Hallowes. I shall make poetry—a line a day,
If nothing more. I'm twenty : I may count
On ten years yet. Three thousand lines, each
line

A very mountain from whose sun-gilt crest
The stormy world a peaceful picture seems.
I shall upheave and range a chain like this :
Realms shall rejoice in it : my fame shall
grow
For ever like the sword.

Smith.

Let fame alone.

Hallowes. You misconceive : fame is the
breath of power :
What valid work was ever for itself
Wrought solely, be it war, art, statesmanship ?
Nothing can be its own reward and hold
Rank above patience, or whatever game,
Angling or avarice, is selfish.

O watering palates ! and, O skiey grapes !
O purple path above the milky way !
Give me to dream dreams all would love to
 dream ;
To tell the world's truth ; hear the world
 tramp time
With satin slippers and with hob-nailed shoes
To my true singing : fame is worth its cost,
Blood-sweats, and tears, and haggard, home-
 less lives.
How dare a man, appealing to the world,
Content himself with ten ! How dare a man
Appeal to ten when all the world should
 hear !
How dare a man conceive himself as else
Than his own fool without the world's hurrah
To echo him !

Smith. But if the world won't shout
Till he be dead ?

Hallowes. Let him address the street :
No subtle essences, ethereal tones
For senses sick, bed-ridden in the down
Of culture and its stifling curtains. Gusts
From bean-fields and the pine-woods, thought
and deed
Of the young world bursting its swaddling
bands
Before the upturned eyes and warning palms
Of fangless Use and Wont, his nurses hoar—
These find an echo everywhere.

Smith. The world
Still follows culture, though.

Hallowes. Maybe. But it
Follows itself, and shall, Narcissus-like,
Perish of self-love.

Smith. Echo, what of her?

Hallowes. She shall be re-incarnate by the
word
That she shall hear.

Smith. What word?

Hallowes. It is not said.

Smith. Who shall pronounce it?

Hallowes. Who knows?—You, or I?

Smith. Well said! We'll go together to
the north.

Hallowes. What! are you free?

Smith. I am. You want to write :
I want to think. When shall we start?

Hallowes. To-morrow.

Smith. So soon! But you are right: one
must become
Fanatic—be a wedge—a thunder-bolt,
To smite a passage through the close-grained
world.

(They go out.)

ACT II.

SCENE.—*An arbour in GRAHAM'S orchard.*

Enter SMITH, HALLOWES, and GRAHAM.

Graham. Now, rest you here ; I've business
in the house :

And when I come I'll bring my daughter.

Ha !

(To Hallowses.) She lives on poetry ; you'll
soon be friends ;

(To Smith.) While you and I and Brown will
talk again

Of London. What !—you called it—let me
see—

The running sore, the ringworm of the earth
Good, very good.

(Goes out.)

Hallowes. You'll make excuse for me.

Smith. Why are you so reluctant to remain?

Hallowes. You do not see the meaning of
the knight.

We trespass in his wood : he meets us ;
storms,

And plays his gamekeeper. Our witty talk

Changes his character, and—we are here :

But mark, on trial ; else, not his arbour,

But his drawing-room.

Smith. He brings his daughter, though.

Hallowes. True ; but you see our humour
was so broad.

Smith. Therefore he does not take us to his
house ?

Suppose it so, is he the less a man ?

Why, it's a powerful thing to do.

Hallowes.

Indeed !

Snobbish, say I.

Smith. Away, man ! Use that word !
A poet, too ! O I could rail at it !
Snob ! It's a modern word ; and so is cad :
None use them but deservers of them. Faugh ;
So bitterly I hate them, into sense
My spleen spins slovenly. We all are men.
Doomsday of nicknames ! I behold it dawn.
An inky cloud, with thick corrosive stench,
Blots out the heavens, and like a palimpsest

Shows name on name in smoking characters,
A leprous scroll, too filthy to o'er-read :
Beneath them, branded deep athwart the
cloud

In letters huge from which the light scales
off,

The most inhuman, most ungodly word,
Sinner. But lo ! the rotten-fuming signs
Smoulder and writhe, and run like mercury,
Flooding the cloud, which belches into flame
And shrivels up beyond the bounds of space !
A rose-dipped pencil washes suddenly
A blush along the east, whereon appears
In molten gold, MAN, WOMAN ; and I know
That we are all one race, and these nicknames,
Phantasmal charnel-lights of self-contempt.

Hallowes. You know I have not always
strength of wing

To soar like you right to God's point of view.
Pardon the word. Now, you must let me go.

Smith. You give no cause : poetic mood
won't do.

I see a mental sickness in your eye :
What is it, Hallowes ?

Hallowes. Why, my money's done :
And day by day from London packets come—
Dramas and poems, essays and reviews,
Returned with thanks, returned with thanks.

Smith. Just so.
Ten pounds I have : take half : when this is
spent
Then we return with thanks to London town.
You have your ticket ?

Hallowes. Oh, yes !

Smith. Cheer up, then !
We have a fortnight yet. Sit down and talk

Of comfortable things. We'll meditate
Upon return-tickets for a while :
How beautifully suited to our need,
Spendthrifts like us ! Devise some praise for
them.

Hallowes. O let me go ! I have my note-
book here.

I'll climb to Merlin-top and write all night
Under the moon or till you follow me.

Smith. Away then, since you must ! Good
luck, good rhymes !

(HALLOWES *goes out.* Enter MAGDALEN
without seeing SMITH.)

(*Aside.*) These plaited coils of hair, the golden
lid

Of the rich casket where her live thoughts lie :

Her cheek is tinged with sunset? Has she
eyes?

Her body sways : the crimson-blazoned west
Like organ-music surges through her blood.
My seeming aimless visit to the north—
The time—the circumstance !—I yield my-
self !

This is the woman whom my soul will love.
She moves this way, backward, to sit. I'll
speak.

Lady.

(MAGDALEN *wheels round.*)

Her eyes are living sapphires !

Magdalen.

What !

Smith. I love you.

Magdalen.

Sir !

Smith.

I love you, lady.

Magdalen (*about to go*).

Sir !

Smith.

Lady, stay.

My body and my soul assembled here,
At war till now, are wedded by your glance :
You make that man which chaos was before :
And this is love. I dreaded love : I knew
It should with such a pang lay hold of me.
I am not mad although I tremble thus :
It is the inspiration of my love.
Fly not, repulse me not, and do not fear :
I would tear up my body with my hands,
And hide you in my heart did evil threat :
I am as tame to you as wild things are
To those that cherish them. Be confident,
For I shall guard my dreams from harming
you
As faithfully as time his vigil keeps.

Magdalen. I do not fear.

Smith. Speak louder, speak again.
Like rose-leaves that enrich the greedy earth
The tremulous whispering bedews my heart.
Speak, speak !

Magdalen. Who are you, sir ?

Smith. A mellow voice,
Falling like thistle-down, melting like snow,
Golden and searching as a sunny wine !
It bore a question : Who am I ? A man.

Magdalen (aside). I think so too.—What do
you want with me ?

Smith. Our language is too worn, too much
abused,
Jaded and over-spurred, wind-broken, lame,—
The hackneyed roadster every bagman
mounts !

I cannot tell you what I want with you,
Unless you understand the depth of this :
I want for you heroic happiness.

Magdalen. How might I win this happiness ?

Smith. Be mine :
I am the enemy of all the world :
Dare it with me : be mine.

Magdalen. I know you not.
I am engaged to one I do not love ;
My father swears that I must marry him :
It is a common misery, so stale
That I contemned it : and I know you not :
But I have courage. Let me think a while.

Smith. Think my thought ; be impatient as
I am ;
Obey your nature, not authority :

Because the world, enchanted by the sun,
The moon, the stars, with charms of time and
space,
Of seasons, tides, of darkness and of light,
Weaves new enchantment everlastingly,
Whirled in a double spell of day and year,
A self-deluded sorcerer, winding round,
Close to its smothered heart, coil after coil
Of magic zones, invisible as air—
Some, Cytherean belts ; some, chains ; and
some,
Noisome and terrible as hooded snakes.

Magdalen. What do you mean? what spells?
what sorcery?

Smith. The hydra-headed creeds ; the
sciences,
That deem the thing is known when it is
named ;

And literature, thought's palace-prison fair ;
Philosophy, the grand inquisitor
That racks ideas and is fooled with lies ;
Society, the mud wherein we stand
Up to the eyes, whence if I drag you forth,
Saving your soul and mine, there shall ascend
A poisonous blast that may o'ertake our lives.

Magdalen. I feel a meaning in your elo-
quence ;

I see my poor thoughts made celestial
Like faded women Jove hung in the sky.
Obey my nature, sir ? How shall I know
The voice of nature from the thousand cries,
That clamour in my head like piteous birds,
Filling the air about a lonely isle
With ringing terror when the hunter comes.

Smith. Shut out the storm and heed the
still, small voice.

Magdalen. Have pity. Yet I think the
woman's dream

Is given me—the strong deliverer
To pluck her from the dragon's jaws un-
harmed.

What can I say? Rest still your eyes on
mine,

And I shall dare to speak. I love you, sir;
And I have loved you since I was a girl—
You, only you. Good-bye. O, in my life—
A miracle, I think, as this world goes—
I met the living image of my dream,
And was found worthy to be loved!

Good-bye.

I seem to see my daughter at my knees,
Listening with violet eyes of heaven-wide
awe,

The virgin story I shall utter once
To her, only to her.

Smith. And so, you go
To hell.

Magdalen. Ay, even so : my father's word
Is plighted to this man, and so is mine.
Perhaps, that I may know this is no dream—
Sir, will you kiss me ?

(He folds her in his arms and kisses her.)

Smith. You are faint, my love.

Magdalen. O, have pity, sir !

Smith. I will have pity.

*(Goes out carrying her. Then enter BROWN.
He goes out after them, and re-enters
running as the curtain falls.)*

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The top of Mount Merlin : a precipice on one side : rocks on the other.*
HALLOWES *is discovered lying with a note-book by his side.*

Hallowes. O noblest hour in my ignoble life!
Hunger and squalor, and delirious rhymes ;
No past, no future ; one unending now
Of meanest misery, most miserable
When fairest dreams gilded the starless night,
And words in choirs flew singing through my
 brain
Melodious thunder, for then most I knew

The yawning wants and gnawing cares of life.
To sink to that inanity abhorred,
The wretch whose early fervour, burnt away,
Leaves him, for lack of ease to smite his
thought

To white-heat—since the brazier of youth,
That needs no sweat, is cold—incapable
Of any meaning, but with loathsome itch
That still essays, and still produces nought,
Or horribly emits untempered scraps—
Toads, cinders, snakes, nameless aborted
things,

The hideous castings witchcraft vomited ;
Maybe to live on grudging charity
Of friends estranged ; sneered at by smug
success ;

Called poetaster : such had been my life ;
But I have chosen death. Death—and the
moon

Hangs low and broad npon the eastern verge

Above a cloud that floods the orient,
Lake-like and wan, embossed with crested
isles

Of pine and birch. Death—and the drops
of day

Still stain the west a faintest tinge of rose
The stars cannot o'erwash with innocence.
Death—and the mountain-tops, peak after
peak,

Lie close and dark beneath Orion's sword.
Death—and the houses nestle at my feet,
With ruddy human windows here and there
Piercing the velvet shade—deep in the world,
Old hedge-rows and sweet by-paths through
the corn !

The river like a sleepless eye looks up.
Pale shafts of smoke ascend from homely
hearths,

And fade in middle air like happy sighs.

Death—and the wind blows chill across my
face :

The thin, long, hoary grass waves at my side
With muffled tinkling Not yet !

No ; my life
Has not ebbed all away : I want to live
A little while Is the moon gone so
soon ?

They've put the shutters to, down there . .
The wind

Is warm Death—is it death ? . .

I had no chance
Perhaps I'll have another where I go . . .
Another chance How black ! . . .

My one true friend !

[*Dies.*

(*Enter SMITH carrying MAGDALEN.*)

Magdalen. I think now I can walk again.

Smith. No need ;
We've reached the summit : see, the circling
world !
Does this seem madness still ?

Magdalen. Mad happiness :
I know we should be here. Ah ! there's a
man !

Smith. My friend, the poet. He has chosen
well :
The cream-white moon, this high peak of the
earth—
The earth, itself the one Parnassus-mount.

Magdalen. And have you climbed the hill
only for him,
Bearing me half the way ? But answer not :
I only wish to feel that I am yours ;

And that this knowledge may be fully mine,
Call me my name. You do not know my
name?

Smith. And wish not : you are woman ; I
am man.

Why should we limit all the thought of this,
Shrouding the Infinite with names ? Our life
Is haunted by these ghosts ourselves have
raised.

O lady, we shall never know the truth,
What man, what love, what God is, till we
cease

To talk of them—which all do in the grave.

Magdalen. How strange it seems to me, and
yet not strange :

Death, life, I care not which, so I am yours.

Smith. And I yours, now, for ever.—Hal-
lowes !—What !—

Asleep?—pale . . . dead ! . . .

 This was a man too slight,
Too sweet to live. I think he has done well ;
For had he stayed strung naked on life's
 wheel,

Broken by every circumstance of woe,
He had gone mad. This sight would pierce
 my heart,

But that yours bucklers mine. A girl-like
 boy !

He used to talk of euthanasia :

How has he killed himself ? Here's blood !

 He said

That should he ever need to take his life
Thus gently would he ope a sluice and die.
I loved him. I shall weep some other time.
What has he written here ?

*(While SMITH examines the note-book enter
GRAHAM, BROWN, and two men-servants.)*

Scored and re-scored,—

Illegible.

Magdalen.

Oh!—my father!

Graham.

So sir!

What Jupiter are you that walk away
With ladies over mountains in the night!
What radiant devil rather! With an art,
Seven times refining the seducer's dross,
You brand the reputation curelessly,
And leave the spotless sufferer to pine,
The guiltless-guilty in a hell of woe.
Or are you but a thundering, blundering fool,
Mad, not malignant? Do you understand?
To-morrow all the county shall declare,
And shortly London echo how Graham's
girl—
Graham, the old fool, who never stirred from
Garth,

And out of harm's way kept his daughter snug,
Filtering her reading, her acquaintanceship—
Never a man but Brown, her lord to be—
How she, when he, too confident because
She just had named the day, brought home
that night—

The first time since his daughter turned
fifteen—

Two men, wild London fellows—hark, away,
With both among the heather, o'er the moor!
For there's your friend, I see, sir. Do you
see?

What's to do? Who is to suffer? Speak,
sir!

Maudlin, he stares at you; you, at the
ground—

But that is well, Brown, speak to him—to
them.

Brown. Love holds my tongue, sir.

Donned buckskin, made a bet, for five long
years.

I've led a dog's life ; done dog's duty too ;
And been as happy as a faithful dog :
And all to save my daughter from the taint
That taints me, taints the world, and taints
the best :

I've no fine names for it ; I know it's there.
I've taught her everything—professors, books :
Made her a—what's the word ?—a paragon :
And now I've got my nephew here, young
Brown,

Who had a grandfather, who had one too—
An Oxford man, a wholesome, handsome boy,
Rich, well-disposed, to marry her : and here,
Safe in my pocket, is their honeymoon—
A map, I mean, where I will follow them—
I've marked in red the route they'll take,
you see—

Before I go to bed. I'll have my fling

After they're married—do you understand ?
My poem out, my picture on the line,
I'll dance, and sing, and dine, and wine, and
shine !

My God, Magdalen, don't stand staring there !
The moon can't help you, bouncing as it is.
I'm going mad. Brown, take my daughter
home.

Magdalen. Father I cannot, now, go home
to-night,
Unless he comes with us.

Graham. He ! whom ? what ! him ?

Magdalen. Father, for him you sacrificed
yourself,
Not knowing how you wrought on fate's be-
half.
Most loving and most noble father, thanks.
My heart is aching with deep thankfulness.

Never had daughter such a holy time
Of preparation : any other life
Would not have made me meet for him.

Graham. Girl ! girl !
Be quiet, now !—Brown, tell us what to do !

Brown. Keep cool, as I am. Smith, I
know your power :
You are the kind of man that healthy girls
Yield to at once, you know.

Graham. What's this ? What's this ?
You've lost your head, I think.

Magdalen. O father, look !
See with my eyes. He's worth a million
Browns.—
(*To Brown.*) Sir, pardon me. You are a
worthy man,

And much above the common stamp, I know.
 Father, this man—I do not know his name—
 Is all the world to me.

Graham. You little fool !
(*He hands MAGDALEN over to BROWN and the servants.*)

Now, sir, I'll pay you down a thousand pounds

To keep this quiet . . . O, the murdered
man!

Ay ; he's been murdered : here's the murderer !

**That's the way out of it! Ha, ha! my buck,
We'll have you clapped in jail.**

Brown. That wouldn't do.
I'll add another thousand. Keep our names . .

Smith. Magdalen !

Magdalen. Yours, only yours.

Graham.

Be quiet !

What's to be done ? See you here, ravisher—
But stop a bit : we're all assuming. Brown,
Perhaps there is some satisfactory—
Some explanation, plausible at least.
Sir, have you anything to say ?

Smith.

Much. First :

You are my enemy, and I am yours.
Rancorous debates, and wars, and martyr-
doms—
The blotted page palmed off for history—
Give tolerance the most forlorn of hopes ;
But with the impartial moon for ensign, here
I dare assay to make my foe my friend.
Even one who overlooked the world with me,
And saw it, as I see it, a flying shuttle,
Weaving a useless web of mystery
That shrouds itself—even he, whose piteous
blood

Stains this green mountain-brow the soft
clouds kiss.

And sweet wild winds freshen continually,
Had not discerned the reason of our deed :
How much less you, who never think at all !
But you must listen : you must try to think.
And see how simple is our presence here :
The way to town is five miles by the road,
And two across the hill ; so this I chose,
Being shorter, and because my friend had
said

He would await my coming. She and I
Are on our way to London.

Graham. You are mad :
You've made her mad. Good night.

(*He is about to lead MAGDALEN away but SMITH holds him.*)

Smith.

Not so :

We are not mad, but you—the world is mad.
You and the world would make her such a
thing,

As poets still cry out on. Mine she is,
Mine by the love that, as we had been gods
Meeting in golden Tempe, dawned and shone
Full-beamed at once. What is more sane
than love ?

The universe is chaos without love. . . .

Graham.

Hold off !

Smith. Be still !—Women are made by men :
The nations fade that hold their women
slaves :

The souls of men that pave their hell-ward
path

With women's souls lose immortality.
What station in our hearts' economy—

The hidden household where our naked
thoughts

Stand at the windows innocent as babes,
Or crouch in corners shamefaced and undone,
Though none may pass but he whose thoughts
they are :

What home, or what foul den we keep them in,
These complements of us, these plastic things
Our fancy fashions to the shape we please—
That is the test of sanity. Behold,
Your daughter, being throned within my heart,
Has straight become a queen !

Graham.

What noise is that ?

Smith. A cry within the wind. Have you
ne'er heard

Prophetic voices muffled in the blast ?

Old man, you've done a high thing for your
child ;

But all is naught if you constrain her now.
Give me the woman whom my soul has
chosen,
Give me the woman who has chosen me.

Graham. Poor fool ! no frantic whim will
change my plan.

(*GRAHAM and BROWN lead MAGDALEN out.*
SMITH attempts to take her from them but
the servants interfere. He hurls them
both to the ground : they rise and run
out. SMITH goes out, and re-enters back-
ward with MAGDALEN on one arm,
keeping GRAHAM and BROWN off with
the other. He stops at the edge of the
cliff.)

Smith. Back, or we plunge together.

Graham. Hold ! (*aside*) That sound !
How could they know ? But yet, they saw
us go.

It is the village coming up the hill !
They'll rescue us. Brown, we must seem to
yield.

This is a madman, no idealist.

Brown. Stark, staring mad.

Graham. Of course. We might have known.
Why, I could laugh. Come on, we'll humour
him.—

Conclusions reached with salience, sir, are oft
Wiser than those we plod to ; for the mind
Tires on the dusty round-about ; and so
I think you have deserved my daughter.

Smith. Ha !

Then you are but a worldling after all :
I know your thought ; I've met it face to face

A hundred times ; and though it owns it not,
It means that all it cannot understand
Is madness, and that highest God is mad.
Is it because the moon is in a cloud
You speak this folly now ?—a human voice !
Some people on the hill ! I see your drift.—
Magdalen Graham

Magdalen. Yours, always, only yours.

Brown. I warn you, monstrous rogue,
abduction earns
A lengthy term of penal servitude.

Smith. Inept fool !—Lady, life, the shooting
star,
Is no more worth than is the miser's gold,
The cultured man's impressions, lust's delight ;
It is a prison innocence may break ;
A moment mere of immortality.

Magdalen. Watch for the moon : she slips
her sable shawl,
And silver lace. Behold !

Smith. The happy night
Heaves a deep long-drawn sigh of sweet content.

Magdalen. O if the world would look on us
like that !

Smith. The world for you and me is one
blank stare—
A basilisk would shrivel up our souls.

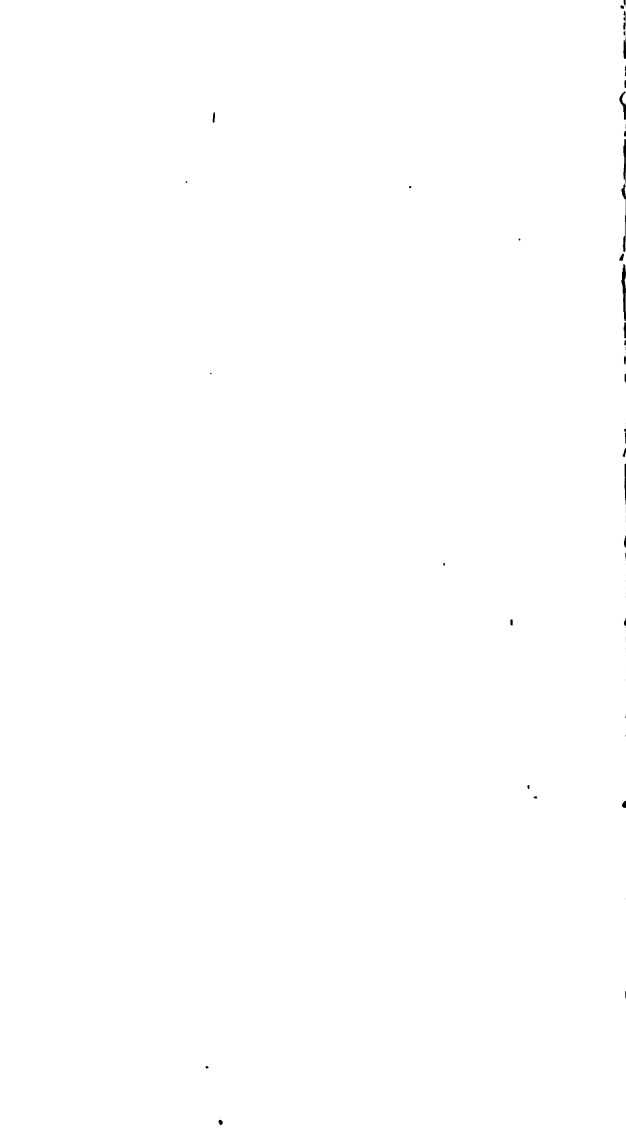
Magdalen. O these hoarse shouts and fiendish empty shrieks !
How near the people are ! Can we not go ?

Smith. Yes, we can go where none will follow us.

We two could never love each other more
Than now we do ; never our souls could
 mount
Higher on passion's fire-plumed wings ; nor
 yet
Could laughter of our children's children
 pierce
With keener pangs of happiness our hearts.
I have a million things to tell my love,
But I will keep them for eternity.
Good earth, good mother earth, my mate
 and me—
Take us.

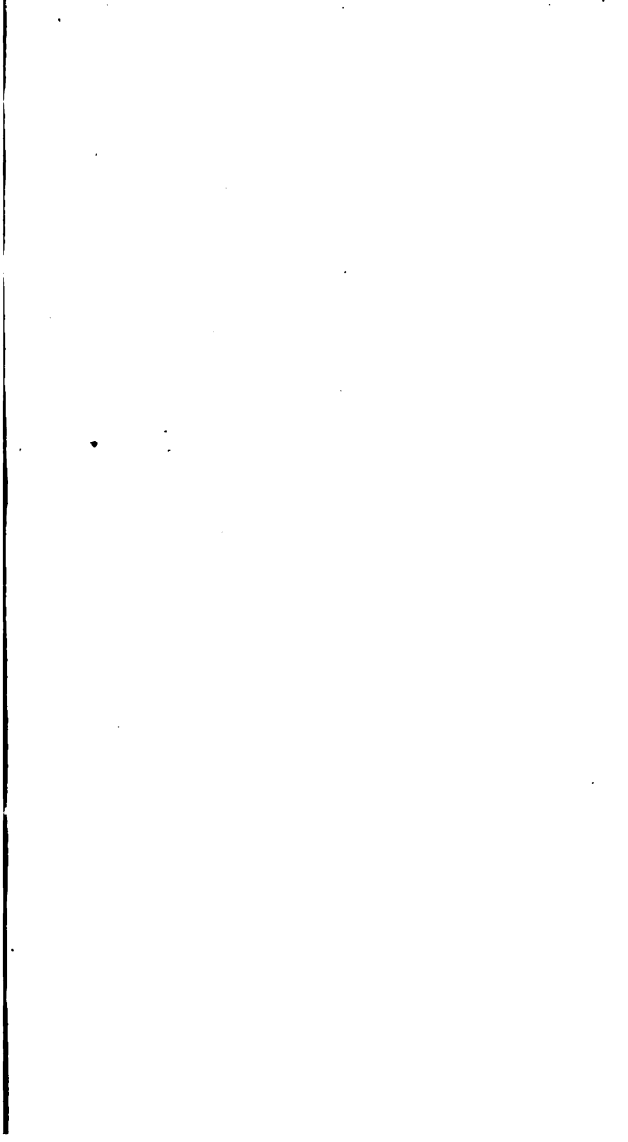
*(He leaps with her over the precipice. GRAHAM
rushes forward, but falls fainting. Enter
villagers, shouting and laughing.)*

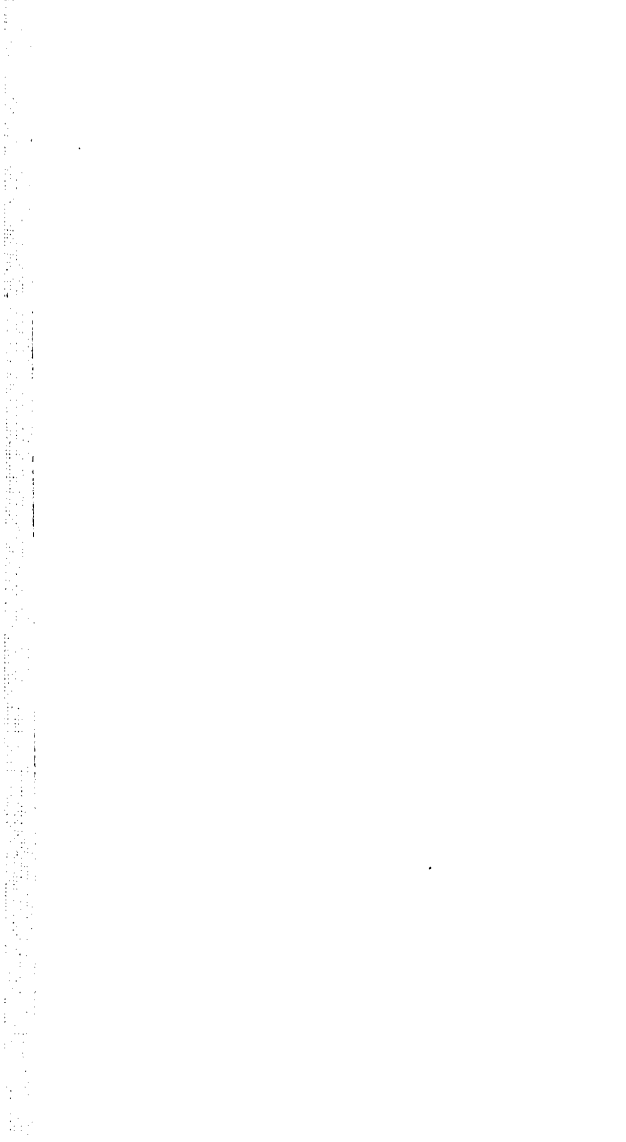
THE END.













JUN 23 1930

